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From: (b) (6)
Sent: (b) (6)
To: (b) (6)
Subject: FW: Request quick review - notes on Extremism STAND DOWN

v/r,

-----Original Message-----

From: (b) (6)
Sent: Wednesday, March 31, 2021 7:24 PM
To: (b) (6)
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Cc: (b) (6)
Subject: Request quick review - notes on Extremism STAND DOWN

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G3 sections completed STANDDOWN on Extremism ALL HANDS training, small group sessions and submitted training completion roster. As we have one new join since completing this training, (b) (6) will work with HQSVCBN to determine when make-up sessions will occur for new join, leave, TAD personnel.

BLUF: Extremism is often in the eye of the beholder. As such Marines, Sailors, Civilians and their leaders should focus on appropriate behavior IAW laws, regulations and guidance to favorably represent the Marine Corps, DoN and DoD plus continue efforts to always return our Marines and Sailors to the general population as good citizens and leaders. The profession of arms requires each member have full trust and confidence in those on their flanks. Divisiveness that can erode that trust and confidence or which can be exploited by our adversaries to their advantage is unacceptable. Social media can be a great enabler when properly used but can also contribute to divisiveness, particularly in the isolation associated with the COVID environment. Marines, Sailors and Civilians should not let a few tarnish the reputation of the many who preceded us, are serving now or discourage those who will serve.

Some section small group highlights:

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-Focus initially was on representing the Corps, yourself and our families appropriately either as a member of the DoD. We are held to a higher standard and need to act accordingly.

-Maintaining an understanding that no one needs to know your opinion on anything, yet alone things that are not common across the service. There isn't any room in the USMC or DoD for any 'ism (except patriotism which can also be radicalized) so if any of us have any thoughts or ideas that tend to go towards a boundary, the chat at the watering cooler in a work setting is not the same as bellying up to the bar with your buddies. Talking race, sexual preference, gender, politics and other sensitive issues either in a work or social media setting are highly not recommended and generally only cause the individual trouble in the end. Same goes for events that could be deemed as extremist organizations or mantras as laid out in the briefings provided.

-One of the largest concern WRT this topic was social media involvement. Discussed digital footprints, trolls, etc. and how likes and comments electronically can be as detrimental to physical interaction WRT this subject matter.

-Takeaways overall were minor but one of the things repeatedly at the onset of the discussion was how the genesis of all this seemed very political in nature and that a few bad apples have dabbled in this arena in terms of outwardly projecting extremist sentiments or actions for as long as anyone could remember. Everyone is aware of the ramifications of their actions and understands how they should carry themselves. Based off directives, training received, etc. there wasn't any issue in terms of following DoD policy or directives.

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-Reviewed the open sentences of the constitution, strong wording that should always bring us together.

-Why the training now, when there have been multiple other events in the past years that would warrant the training (seems politically driven)?

-Not provoked, group also brought up isolation and individuals "being fed" only what's in SM feeds; lack of human-to-human contact will continue to take cultural tolls.

-We need to talk more about commonality across the team (both inside the USMC and as Americans); we only talk about differences, even when trying to promote equality we talk about (and highlight) differences, we never talk about the commonality among us and the importance of common truths.

-It's ok to have different opinions, we need to be comfortable talking about differences of opinion but end on a common value we can all uphold.

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-Clearly define / provide DoD definition of extremism - much discussion during the Town Hall and associated questions on what was and was not considered extremism. Establish / communicate clear guidelines - focus on what to do.

-Stay on top of small things that set the military apart from other organizations - should be 100% accountability on a daily basis. Get out of fire and forget guidance via e-mail and communicate with troops the importance of accountability by demonstrating.

-Social media - provide healthy alternative means to connect in times of isolation. COVID is not helping, when we are all encouraged to isolate. People are spending more time on social media due to COVID (statista.com statistics), where narrative can be easily steered.

-Inter-personal communications - get off email, get away from teams to communicate in the same building and get back to speaking with our personnel. COVID has forced us to rely heavily on technology - as / if we come out, we should revert to the method of actually talking to our personnel, give them a feeling of belonging vs. detached communication - will likely help decrease suicide rates as well.

Happy to discuss any of above observations.

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Director, Operations

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